

So, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to say this tonight, and I will not push the point of order.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the amendment is withdrawn.

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON-LEE OF TEXAS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the Clerk will report the amendment.

There was no objection.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. The amount otherwise provided in this Act for "Grants-in-Aid for Airports" administered by the Federal Aviation Administration of the Department of Transportation is hereby decreased by \$10,000,000 and increased by \$10,000,000.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I thank the distinguished chairman and I thank the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee and the ranking member of the subcommittee. Let me thank both of the individuals, the chairperson, Mr. OLIVER, and the ranking member, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, for their leadership. I thank you so very much.

We've worked on this issue in the past, and I think many of us are aware of the surrounding neighborhoods around large airports, and I know that as Members of Congress we have been challenged by that because we recognize that the vitality of airports certainly support the economy of our cities.

I happen to represent a very large airport in Houston, Texas, and I also represent the neighborhoods that surround it. At this time, of course, we are working on a number of noise studies in our area, and it is a continuing journey as our airport continues to expand. Sometimes it takes money but sometimes it takes policy.

We recognize that one of the advantages of modern life is the convenience of air travel. America's air transportation system is the best and safest in the world, but airports are not quiet. If you ask any resident that lives near a busy airport, you will hear many grievances about the noise level.

Although there is no way to make airports soundproof, it is possible to reduce airport noise so it is less disruptive to the lives of the families that live near some of the Nation's busiest airports who work and pay their taxes.

Mr. Chairman, the purpose of my amendment is to encourage the Federal Aviation Administration to be more

proactive in helping communities reduce, eliminate or cope with the ever increasing levels of airport noise.

Specifically, I call upon the FAA to undertake a nationwide study of airport mitigation problems and best practices at the 10 busiest airports in America and report its findings, along with recommendations to address major problems found to be existing, to the Congress within 180 days.

□ 2115

Under the airport improvement program administered by the FAA, grants are available to airports and local governments to fund noise reduction projects located in areas significantly affected by airport noise above 65 decibels over a 24-hour average, as indicated by the notation 65 dB(A) DNL. Noise mitigation grants are generally not available for areas in which the noise level may be substantial, but does not exceed 65.

Please, all of you, join me in those surrounding neighborhoods, and try to be able to resolve or to be able to accept the noise at that level. Therefore, money does not solve the problem; policy does. So we would like to ensure that we have the real information opportunity to determine the impact, substantial impacts that occurred to millions of people well below the 65 decibel level.

Information generates policy. This value is inadequate for several reasons. We find from the scientific perspective, it is not supported by research. The 65 decibel level is derived from the Schultz curve, which correlated people reporting being highly annoyed by noise with noise levels. Substantial impact occurs well before people become highly annoyed. In addition, the data used in the Schultz curve for airports show that highly annoyed occurs around 57 decibels, not 65. That comes from the Journal of Acoustical Society of America.

The EPA has identified 55 dB(A) DNL as a more appropriate noise level. The day-night average sound level is the level of noise expressed in decibels as a 24-hour average, and averages do not adequately account for the impact of aircraft noise on individuals.

Research has shown that the noise disruption as low as 55 decibels can negatively affect communities near airports. Our airports are trying. In my own district, we have had several meetings. I know that this issue is a concern, because we have addressed this question in airports and cities around the Nation, including the State of Minnesota.

It is important to stress that this amendment does not entitle any airport, local government or other eligible entity, to receive a noise mitigation grant, nor does it have any financial impact that reduces funding in noise mitigation. This amendment provides for an opportunity for focusing on the issue of noise mitigation and the difficulty of using a singular num-

ber, 65, while communities around the Nation suffer.

We are going to continue to pursue this. We have done this every year to bring attention to this problem of noise mitigation and the fact that no person who lives in and around an airport acknowledges the fact that the airport is not important, but what we are trying to emphasize is that we must provide solace for those who live surrounding airports.

I ask my colleagues to support my amendment.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes it takes money, but sometimes it takes policy. We recognize that one of the advantages of modern life is the convenience of air travel. America's air transportation system is the best and safest in the world, but airports are not quiet. If you ask any resident that lives near a busy airport, you will hear many grievances about the noise level.

Although there is no way to make airports soundproof, it is possible to reduce airport noise so it is less disruptive to the lives of the families that live near some of the Nation's busiest airports, work and pay their taxes.

Mr. Chairman, the purpose of my amendment is to encourage the Federal Aviation Administration to be more proactive in helping communities reduce, eliminate, or cope with ever-increasing levels of airport noise. Specifically, I call upon the FAA to undertake a nationwide study of airport noise mitigation problems and best practices at the 10 busiest airports in America and report its findings, along with recommendations to address major problems found, to the Congress within 180 days.

Mr. Chairman, under the Airport Improvement Program administered by the FAA, grants are available to airports and local governments to fund noise reduction projects located in areas significantly affected by airport noise above 65 decibels over a 24-hour average, as indicated by the notation 65 dB(A) DNL. Noise mitigation grants are generally not available for areas in which the noise level may be substantial but does not exceed the 65 dB(A) DNL. Therefore money does not solve the problem; policy does.

However, substantial impacts occur to millions of people well below the 65 decibel level. This value is inadequate for several reasons:

From a scientific perspective, it is not supported by research. The 65 decibel level is derived from the Schultz Curve which correlated people reporting being highly annoyed by noise with noise levels.

Substantial impact occurs well before people become highly annoyed. In addition, the data used in the Schultz Curve for airports shows that "highly annoyed" occurs around 57 decibels, not 65, and that comes from a Journal of the Acoustical Society of America.

The EPA has identified 55 dB(A) DNL as a more appropriate noise level. The day/night average sound level is the level of noise expressed in decibels as a 24-hour average, and averages do not adequately account for the impacts of aircraft noise on individuals.

Research has shown that noise disruption as low as 55 decibels can negatively affect communities near airports. Unfortunately, communities that have a dB(A) less than 65 are precluded from applying for an Airport Improvement Program grant to reduce airport noise. We need to help them. I have even